

Tourism Workforce Assessment Forum
Show Low
August 3, 2005

Discussion Topic 1: Recruitment, Retention & Succession

What successful strategies do you use to recruit entry-level employees?

- During summer months very flexible with hours
- Send managers from several levels to high schools to generate enthusiasm for the industry. Good success
- Bring students to property, give tour, explain job types
- Career fairs—bring good prospects in for a day
- College intern program, vocational training program with NPC
- Post in unemployment office
- Blue Ridge school has hospitality program
- Chefs Federation gives students hands-on, shadow opportunities

What successful strategies do you use to recruit management employees?

- Steal from other organizations
- Positions often stay open a long time
- Hard to fill controller, HR director, marketing director, banquet management, F&B management
- Advertise positions with industry associations
- Buxton Community ID survey—town council of Pine Top, Lakeside, and business investors are funding
- Bringing up through the ranks is often successful
- Tribal education department brings students each summer
- Pay for employer to train in specific skills

Besides wages, what factors contribute to employee turnover?

- Job satisfaction, feel part of team, feel appreciated
- Burn out, especially during high season
- Bad employers are a problem—don't treat employees well
- Certain percent of employee pools see these jobs as "place holders" until they find something better
- Insurance benefits really help, can help reduce turnover
- Lots of students working summer jobs
- Full-time employees often lose jobs after high season

What are you doing/could you do to attract young people to consider a career in the tourism industry?

- Hard to persuade someone to enter tourism industry because wages are so low
- Need to appeal on different level—this industry allows you to choose where you want to live, excitement, variety, good for multi-taskers
- You can be Steve Wynn
- Fully explain all the career paths
- Marketing secretary can become sales manager, for example
- All career paths need to be explained in high school
 - Job fairs
 - Guidance staff
- Appeal to those who want to see the world
- Find kids with right personality and mentor them
- Upward mobility, discuss time frame
- Set good example—talk about the job with enthusiasm

How are you preparing employees for advancement in your organization?

- Pay for students to obtain degree
- Those students get first crack at new job openings
- Monthly training topics (marketing, self-defense)—voluntary participation
- Mandatory training as customer service
- Cross train
- Do you reimburse? How? For degree? For attendance? Base on grades (!=95% of class paid, etc)

- Need employer participation in education reimbursement
- Hon Dah pays 100% as long as class is work-related
- White Mountain tribe also pays for a lot of education, training
- Tourism industry should take care of its own

Are there jobs that a guest worker program would be especially well-suited to fill?

- More Spanish-speaking employees needed
- Use overseas apprentices, mostly from Europe, successfully. Not in top management spots because they will go back home, but good in middle management
- Asian market is huge—appropriate language skills should be cultivated
- In many other countries, hospitality jobs really are careers, so our employees could really learn from those workers how this should be done
- Low wage, entry-level jobs
- If we paid more, maybe Americans would be more interested in these jobs

Discussion Topic 2: Industry Trends

How do changing travel preferences affect your workforce and training needs?

- More local, regional, state travel, shorter trips
- Gas prices play a role
- Yesterday's excellent is today's average=meeting customer expectations is harder, faster, more necessary
- Employees in this industry need to enjoy fast-paced, constantly-changing environment
- Cost of housing is high here, which means many tourism employees can't afford housing
- Don't have affordable housing for local kids, young married, so they leave
- No housing affects job loyalty

What other social trends (cultural, environmental, political, economic, demographic, etc.) do you anticipate impacting your industry?

- People realizing this area has plenty of water—this will draw lots of new residents
- Many travelers want to instant gratification in terms of finding info, hooking, service expectation
- AZ TV stations promote travel north to Flagstaff, not travel east to this region. This will change
- Many locals from other parts of the state become visitors in summer

What new jobs are emerging in your company or industry?

- Language skills
- IT skills
- Appreciation of local culture to be able to convey to visitors. History of region, cultural awareness
- Recruit at NAU School of Hospitality
- Sunrise is gaining ground among Mexicans—more opportunity to advertise this region in Mexico
- Sitgreaves National Forest will lose employees, more jobs behind computers, less working in the forest
- Campers are requiring more services than they are prepared to offer. Really looking for certain personalities

Over the next five years, what jobs and job skills areas are being phased out from your company or industry?

- Casino industry—ticket in/ticket out—fewer coins being used=fewer manual jobs, more IT jobs
- Sitgreaves—all HR people being pulled nationwide, concentrated in Albuquerque
- More centralization=fewer employees
- Looking at contracting out firefighting jobs
- Outsourcing is a big factor—will hurt rural communities
- Fish & Game may be cloning fish hatchery—will cause many problems for tribal jobs. Will hurt White Mountains in general because many come here to fish
- Can become too efficient—no one greeting the customer will get pushback
- People come to rural area for personal connection, personal service

What impact will aging of workforce have on staffing in your industry?

- The older the employee the better—they have experience and manners
- Huge resource
- Can learn new skills
- Usually not looking for the money, looking for new experience
- Health costs of older employees a challenge

- Need to respect their life experience
- Training technique may need to be different than with younger workers
- Sometimes knowledge retention is a challenge

What intergenerational issues affect your workforce?

- More successes with intergenerational workforce than challenge gap in information transfer
- Younger have less communication skills, shorter attention span, can't write, no problem solving
- No adversarial issues between young and old
- Younger generation often does not stay here
- All team members need to be equally respected
- Some cultural issues with younger managers supervising older workers. Just acknowledge their experience, then lead, many will follow

Discussion Topic 3: Staff Development & Training

What are you currently doing to train and update the skills of your employees?

- Hon Dah opened training dept 2 years ago—lots of in-house training, send people off property (AZ, NM, Las Vegas) offer to bring trainers to the property
- Review procedures regularly in staff meetings
- Staff retreats—team building, goals
- Many small businesses have cut training to cover health costs
- Cross training
- Look for creative exchanges with other businesses/associations for training in other environments
- Sometimes hard at community-level to convince taxpayers that spending the money on training is worth it. Must show ROI

What educational partnerships does your organization currently have, and how could these be improved?

- Northern Arizona Vocational Institute—9 locations, each offers specialty. Communities just have to ask for specific training and they get it—Fire management, cosmetology, heavy equipment, power plant management, automotive, etc—This type of partnering is critical
- JTED—under assault by legislative
- Chambers conduct entrepreneurship training, customer service training
- S.C.O.R.E. as model to tap underutilized retired resources (part of SBA)

What needs do you or your customers have that you are unable to meet because your employees don't have the necessary skills?

- Customer service training—need employees to know about this area
- Good training can reduce turnover
- Often the ones who need training the most don't come to available training programs
- Those managers consistently engaging in crisis management are likely poor managers who have not empowered employees to do their job

What can be done to help prepare younger members of the workforce to appropriately service the needs of your customers?

- Need good role models
- Mentoring—both formal programs and informal
- TEAM environment—strive not to let team members down
- Most understand the nature of the business they are getting into—how far they can go and how global this business is
- Need to cover up tattoos, piercings—not appropriate
- Learn how to groom themselves
- Hospitality industry often uses uniforms

What can be done to help aging members of the workforce to appropriately service the needs of your customers?

- Feel their life experience is appreciated
- Part of something bigger
- Put them in positions where they can succeed
- Aging Boomers often act like they know everything and some younger people have trouble dealing with that—tribal example
- Hon Doh operates using tribal preference. Use testing and judgment to evaluate people applying

- On the reservation, every town is a border town
- Learning to adapt to new environments is critical

How will technology affect your staff training and development capacity?

- Technology is a tool that is part of job but it does not facilitate job
- One-on-one training seems most effective
- The more it is “watch this video”, the less effective the training is
- Technical skills are OK to learn via video, etc, but the application training is more effective in person
- Technology can make things more intimidating, makes it seem more difficult than it is
- How do we reach those not in the “choir”
- No private business on the reservation because tribe has owned everything. Starting to change, but there is no base of knowledge to build on